Morning Manna

Food for thought and for your Soul!!

Bishop Bramlett Cooper

  **"A Life of Distinction"** God has an expectation that we individually and collectively live a distinct and consecrated life unto him. We will know we're making some progress in our spiritual lives when we began to function like the thumb on our hands. The thumb is a part of the hand - yet very distinct in its role whether its demonstrated in guiding the pencil in handwriting, controlling the grip of a handshake, or holding other fingers in place when making a fist. In I Corinthians 12:18, Paul says God has placed the members in the body as it has pleased Him! Thumbs don't complain of the role they play nor of living in a very distinct position from the other fingers on the hand. As thumbs live a "life of distinction," we are chosen by God to also be very distinct in our walk, our talk, our thoughts, AND our actions.

A life of distinction means bearing our cross, enduring hardness as a good soldier, and never trying to function as any other finger! As we go about this day, let us walk and live in distinction! Be blessed in Jesus name!

"**The Power of Palm Sunday**" This Sunday, we celebrate Palm Sunday which honors Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion. You will also note Jesus rode into town on a donkey (which is symbolic of coming in peace!) During that great battle of Armageddon, he'll ride on a horse - (which is symbolic of coming in war!). Jesus was warmly greeted by huge crowds who shouted Hosanna (which means "save or rescue"). Even today, we should all have a "Hosanna" in our spirit as we honor the risen Savior of the world.  The crowd laid down palm leaves and branches and sang the Lord's praise as he entered into Jerusalem. Just a few days later, they had captured, tortured, crucified, and buried this same Jesus whom they had just celebrated. How quickly He went from friend to foe, from famous to forsaken, from life to death and from death to life! This same life he still extends today - although, THIS IS A LIMITED TIME OFFER!

"**Covered by the Blood**" While the children of Israel were captive in Egypt, God sent a plague into the land whereby all the first-born of Egypt would die. However, God's protection to his people at that time was to cover their doorposts with the sprinkling of blood. But God's further instruction was - "...And when I see the BLOOD, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you". Within the Passover story, the children of Israel had a responsibility! They had to cover the two side posts and the top of their door in order to be protected from the plague. Today, there's a plague of apostasy (abandoning spiritual values) that's in the land! The question is, are YOU covered under the blood? Have you sprinkled your spiritual doorpost with commitment and dedication to the true and living God? Have you forsaken ALL to follow Christ? If we get caught up in the cares and pleasures of this life, we won't be caught up when the trumpet sounds! Be blessed and stay covered in His blood!

"**Waiting for a Word**" Sometimes, our greatest challenge in enduring our test is waiting for a Word from the Lord!  Many have heard a voice, but it wasn't a WORD! Some have felt something in their spirit - BUT, it wasn't a WORD!  When God sends "A WORD", we must be ready to act and respond to his voice. In the bible, we find several examples of where God's people had to wait on His Word and then heed His voice. What if Abraham didn't heed the word while on Mt. Moriah about to sacrifice his son (Isaac)? What if Moses had missed God's voice which stated, Lift up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the Red Sea? Last but not least, the man at the Pool of Bethesda was waiting on the annual troubling of the water, but almost missed "A Word" from Jesus which asked - "Will thou be made whole?" Jesus completed that Word by telling the man to, "Take up thy bed and walk!" The common thread in all of these examples is that they all had an expectation of God and they were all tuned into the right channel for a Word! I close with a reminder in Psalms 27:14 where David says, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." God has spoken, and He is speaking! Our challenge is to have more "Yes Lord's" in our response than "Why me's!" Be blessed!

"**If We Faint Not!"**  The Word of God admonishes us to not be weary in well-doing, for in due-season - we shall reap IF we faint not. There are two points I'd like to stress within this scripture: 1) "In due season,"  as we move from season to season via climate changes etc. - we are often comforted with the "hope" of the next season. A few weeks ago, many complained about how cool it was and that spring had been delayed. We are now feeling the changes of the season that we felt would never arrive. Our tests, trials, and maturing in Christ often lead us to feel that a change of seasons is not coming fast enough. Thus, the Word that says, "be not weary in well doing". In other words, stay the assigned course where God has purposed and planted you! 2) Reaping God's best requires giving up something! Until we have fully surrendered stuff that please our flesh - we can not and will not reap all the fullness of God! Stay blessed!

"**Keepers of the Flame**" As we remain spiritual vessels in God's refinery, we must remember that transformation MUST take place until self-will, sin,  impurities, etc. are burned away as we submit to God's will and His way. The Word says in Ezekiel 20."Behold I will kindle a fire in thee and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flame shall not be quenched." I'm not sure if you've ever tried burning a green tree - but it is quite a task. A portion of it may burn and create smoke - but it is quite rebellious, stubborn, resilient, to consume. In other words, God has the power to place an internal flame within that can even consume "our green trees" of righteous living! Needless to say, this comes at a price! Don't take out your wallets - but prepare to lose yourself and be humbled under the authority of God via the Holy Ghost! We must be "*Keepers of the Flame*" - in order to see his face in peace! Be blessed.

"**Lessons from Enoch**" One of my favorite men in the bible is Enoch. It is my belief if we fully apply Enoch's principles in life - we shall be victorious. Here's Enoch's bio: 1) He was 365 yrs old - which happen to be the number of days in a calendar year, 2) He's the father of the oldest man that ever lived (Methuselah, 969 yrs), 3) He walked with God which means his constant care and concern was FOR God and OF God! 4) And my favorite lesson from Enoch is God "took him!" Enoch's life and dedication to God was so pleasing that God had a recall on his life and brought him back into His kingdom! In other words, Enoch never got an opportunity to fall asleep! What if our lives and dedication to God were so profound that God simply recalled us back to himself? Enoch's recall back to God did not come cheap! When we walk with God - everything else becomes secondary! Then and only then is God truly the head of our lives! Let us live daily where our constant actions are for MORE of God and LESS of us!

"**The God of Reconciliation**" In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, we learn how God reconciled us (or received us into his favor) by Jesus Christ. Not only that, but He gave us (collectively) the ministry of reconciliation which means we must transform and convert others into harmony with him. In other words, God did not hold our faults and sins against us but gave us a clean bill of health through salvation and righteous living. He has also placed this same empowerment upon us that we should reconcile both sinner and saint through sharing the good news and with showing forgiveness/favor among each other. That means that if/when we don't forgive our brother, our sister, or ourselves - we have made a mockery and a sham out of Jesus' sacrifice on cavalry! Jesus had every valid reason in the world to not forgive his enemies BUT- yet he did! Jesus' and Stephen's last prayer was for forgiveness of man's ignorance (defined as a lack of knowledge!) Be smart, don't be so hardened in your heart whereby the love of God can't penetrate! Be blessed & be reconciled!

"**How Great is our God?"** It would be awesome if we ALL could pause for just one moment today and ask ourselves "How Great is our God?" The irony is - for some, God has demonstrated His greatness and for others God's greatness has not yet been fully realized. Why? In short, we have not yielded to the authority and power of God! This authority and power only comes through faith and obedience to his will, which begs to question, are we doing our will or God's will? We will only fully recognize God's greatness when we have obeyed his voice, stood our tests, and undergone spiritual suffering (as He endured). His suffering was at the hands of Pharisees, Scribes, etc. Are you suffering for the cause of Christ? This doesn't refer to bills or cares of this life - but REAL suffering is when you've taken a spiritual stand and was buffeted by the enemy? It’s at this moment we can look over and see Jesus in the midst of our fire! As the song says, every day with Jesus becomes sweeter than the day before! Be blessed!

"**Let your Glory fill the house"** Now more than ever before, God's people should desire His glory to fill our house. When we speak of "house", we're referring to your heart, your home, and even our sanctuary - the church. In Haggai 2, the Word says, “and I will fill this house with glory, said the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former." This latter house refers to Jesus - wrapped in human flesh - who would come and fulfill God's will. The question is, does the glory of God fill your temple - whether that's in your heart, your home, or your church? Is there evidence that God's glory abide in these three places? Last question, can you feel his presence in these three places? If the answer to any of these questions is NO, then you have officially evicted the Savior from the premises of your soul! You've placed all of his power and authority out on the street!

In short, He no longer has residence or dominion in your life. My friend, Jesus is yet knocking - ANSWER the door! Very soon, the knocks will cease! Be blessed!

"**Serving God in a Strange Land**" The bible tells us that this world is not our home, but we are simply passing through! Yet in this "strange land", we have the ability to serve the Lord with gladness and singleness of heart. At one point, the Israelites were captives in a strange land and were required to sing. They asked their captors the question, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land"? (Psalms 137) For the church of today, we can see more and more suppression of God's Word, compromise of His standards, and unbelief roams rampant! Do we have any Pentecostal believers who will yet praise and worship him in our "strange land"? Your strange land may be a test, a trial, issues on the job, trouble at home, etc...but if you could just release out of your belly a "YET will I praise him!!" God will be glorified and He will deliver you - as he did Israel!! Be blessed on this Lord's day!

“**The Word of God**" Hebrews 4:12 tells us "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart". Our bible that we read is not just a book of many writers and authors. It is the Words of God - spoken in power and authority! This scripture gives us 3 things that His word is: Its Quick, its Powerful, and its Sharp! The Word is Quick because its content springs into our mind when we're witnessing to others or need a word of strength for ourselves! The Word is Powerful because it brings dominion and authority to those who apply its principles. The Word is Sharp because it cuts, slices, and divides anyone or anything that oppose it! Not only did God send us the Holy Ghost as a Comforter - but he left us "His Word" as a tool to nail down, pluck up, or grind into powder anything that oppose His Will! Be blessed!

"**The Cause of Christ**" During Jesus' crucifixion, Simon the Cyrene helped him bear his cross up Golgotha's hill. What he didn't know was Jesus was carrying humanity's eternal cross! So that begs to question, Are we bearing the cross that Jesus has placed before us? Just to clarify, our cross is NOT our bills, gasoline for the car, or other tangible things. In reality, our cross is suffering for the cause of Christ! Have you had your glass of suffering this day, this week, this month for Christ's sake? If not, let's re-evaluate if we are indeed positioned to bear our own cross that brings us the testimony in a song - "I'm saved by his power divine...Life now is sweet and my joy is complete cause I'm saved, saved, saved"! Let us also find value in the life of Simon the Cyrene who assisted for a cause greater than himself!

"**The fast that we have chosen**" At the beginning of July we began our month of fasting, some were very concerned and maybe fearful of a fast without a finish line! As per Genesis 12, Abraham did not receive "the blessings" of God until he left Haran - a temporary stopover toward Canaan!  Maybe we've had an unscheduled stopover and now we must get back to walking within our purpose. Ephesians 5:15-16 tells us to, "walk cautiously and alert before God, redeeming the time as the days grow more evil". My heart's desire and prayer to God is that we continue our journey of fasting (without a known end) and be mindful of what God has already done thus far. At least 5 souls baptized, 1 receiving the Holy Ghost, and several testimonies of personal breakthroughs or deliverance over the past few days! We are not DONE! Let's prepare to reclaim any and all that the enemy has tried to steal! As we P.U.S.H (Pray Until Something Happens) and F.U.S.H. (Fast Until Something Happens) - it is OUR TIME! Be blessed in the Lord!

"**It's Great Being Remembered**" In Psalms 8:5, David asks; "What is man that thou art mindful of him". Maybe David's question could also be stated, who is man that thou art mindful of him? During the course of the year, many of us are remembered on birthdays or special occasions from our family, loved ones, or friends. Without question, it gives us a warm feeling when they will shower us with love, gifts, or a card that says just the right thing on our special day. However, these expressions of love don't always come when they're most needed (i.e.- a period of disappointment, failure, or grief). BUT, I'm so glad that we serve a Savior that also remembers his people on a day by day, moment by moment basis! And just when you think nobody knows, cares, or understands - he LIFTS us into his caring arms and comforts us, when no one else feels your infirmity. We are forever present on God's radar as He vigilantly covers us in his love and under his blood! Be blessed!

"**A Reason for Seasons**" Jesus explained to his followers that "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power - but ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you". Just as we have spring, summer, fall, and winter - we also have seasons in our spiritual lives. This scripture begs to question, why do the cares of this life cause us to forget the promises and covenants of God? In addition, when we walk, live, and act in the Holy Ghost - He has pre-positioned us for victory in any circumstance. The four weather seasons are all important for growth and reproduction. So are the seasons in our spiritual lives! That complex problem, that financial matter, that troubled marriage, that unbearable illness, that drama on the job are ALL purposed for your spiritual growth and development. On this day, I command you to "Go and Grow Up!" Be blessed.

"**God's Witness Protection Program**" Our federal government has a witness protection program designed to protect someone who has the courage to testify or bear witness against a murderer, drug lord, etc. This program provides a new life, a new shelter, new identity, new environment, and may even change one's appearance. When we convert to a life of holiness, we are automatically enrolled in such a program! When we give up life as we know it for a changed life in Jesus -we are becoming a witness for the Lord! We receive the benefits of a spiritual covering, a new identity, secret service protection provided by grace and mercy, and a new beginning! THEN, we can boldly testify for the one who protects us from fear, harassment, uncertainty, and eventually destruction! In closing, the Word says "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony!" We testify with our lives, and not with our mouth! Be blessed!

**"The Paths of Righteousness"** In Psalms 23, David says - "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake". I begin to wonder why David referred to it as paths, instead of path of righteousness. Then the Word was confirmed in Proverbs 3:6 where it says "he shall direct thy paths". Then the story begins to come together as I remembered Isaiah 40 which tells us "how" He would direct and clear our paths. He says - "every valley shall be exalted", "every mountain and hill shall be made low", "the crooked shall be made straight", "the rough places plain". All of these are the paths of the righteous. Where are you in your journey today? A hill, a valley, a winding road, a bumpy road?? Wherever you are, we have this assurance in Isaiah 40:5 - "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it".

*"****The Value of Nothing****" Jesus said on a couple of occasions in St. John 5 that He could do "nothing" of his own self will - but it was through the Father where his strength and direction comes from. So I could only wonder - what's the value of "nothing"? Nothing is clearly not everything, and definitely not something. It’s even less than anything! Its "no thing" which means it has no existence. Jesus was trying to make the point that we have "no existence" without him and being led by His will! The Word says that in Him - we live, we move, and we have our being! That's simply to say that we LIVE in him and without him, we don't exist! Are you REALLY ready to live - then get in Him and Him in you!! Otherwise, we remain nothing*.

*"****A life without God****"! Can you imagine your life without God? Just to put that in perspective - your praise, prayer & worship would have no receiver! The birds would sing to whom? The trees, flowers, & plants would droop as they'd have nothing to draw them higher! The streams, lakes, & oceans would dry up as they'd have no means to regenerate! Just so you know, in the beginning (before God), the bible says in Genesis 1 that the earth was "without form & void". Quite frankly, many of our lives are still without form (no spiritual structure) and some are void (lacking) of the "knowledge of God"! David said, if I ascend to heaven, if I make my bed in hell, if I take wings of the morning & dwell out among the sea - THOU ART THERE! Today, I share David's belief that God is and has been there ALL the time! I can't even imagine, nor would I desire to picture MY LIFE without God! Be blessed!*

 *"****A song of songs****"! Psalms 42:8 says, "Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me". The words to a popular song says, "God gave me a song that the angels cannot sing - I've been washed in the blood of the crucified one, I've been redeemed". In case you don't understand what that means, even the angels in heaven cannot sing our song of redemption because they were not redeemed as we were from the shackles of sin! In short, God gave us a customized song that speaks to our redemption through Jesus Christ. As the psalmist said, even in the night - God will comfort, caress, and bring inspiration (not just emotion) that gets us through the night. I'm so glad to know that God specializes in things that seem impossible. I'm glad to know that his grace is amazing. I'm glad to know that WE can make it - when we surrender ALL. This was the Lord's way of reminding you of many songs he's placed in our hearts, minds, and souls that's an eternal flame of victory! Be blessed!*

***April 25, 2012***
*"****Finding peace in the midst of your Storm****". Many sailors tell their stories of enduring a storm at sea for many days. The common theme in these folk tales is most "had lost all hope" of surviving. Paul tells us his story at sea in Acts 27 and acknowledges that all hope that they would be saved was taken away. Our spiritual storms can sometime hit rough waters - BUT my friend, YOU CAN'T lose hope! Even in Paul's story, the answer for hopelessness was "be of good cheer!” When we wear a sad face or become cranky with the world, it doesn't help our cause! I will add, we should be confident in the God of our salvation that He will make a way out of no way. Always remember, God holds the distinct record of making dry land out of an ocean, water from a rock, speech from a donkey, sight from a spittle of clay and he saved my soul! Now what did you say your problem was?*